

**State of Delaware –Delaware Women's Workforce Council
Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy
Department of Human Resources**

Regular Meeting
Dover, Cannon Building, Conference Room
Tuesday, March 6th, 2018
11:00 am to 12:30 pm

Attendees:

Melanie Ross Levin, Director, Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy
Louise Cummings-Lewis, Chairperson
Kimberly Reinagel-Nietubicz
Katey Evans
Yvonne Gordon
Rita Paige
Roxane E.A. Ferguson
Dr. Marie Laberge
Christopher Waters

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Louise Cummings-Lewis at 11:00am.

Updates from the Office of Women's Advancement

Melanie Ross Levin introduced two new Office of Women's Advancement & Advocacy team members, Shaleah Sutton and Carling Ryan, to the Workforce Council. Melanie stated that Shaleah and Carling will be assisting the Council on some of its duties. The Office of Women's Advancement & Advocacy is now fully staffed. Additionally, social media channels and newsletters are in the process of being launched. Ms. Ross Levin also noted that she has been working on the rewrite of the State's Sexual Harassment Policy.

The legislators are back in session this week and there are a lot of bills that the Office of Women's Advancement & Advocacy and the Workforce Council supports. Ms. Ross Levin noted that the Office would have a presence in Legislative Hall and would be advocating for those bills.

Ms. Ross Levin discussed the Office's "Redefining Women in the Workplace" lecture, which was being planned, with sponsorship and assistance from the Governor's Office and the Women's Commission. The lecture would be held to recognize Women's History Month and to honor Margaret Rose Henry for her years of service to the state. She asked the Council if

they would like to be added as sponsors/co-hosts of the event; **Rita Paige motioned for the Council to co-host the event, and Christine Mason seconded. All were in favor.**

In addition to the lecture, a rally for the Equal Rights Amendment will be held on March 28th at noon, and Ms. Ross Levin encouraged everyone to attend and wear purple.

Salary Negotiation Trainings

Ms. Ross Levin announced that, in partnership with the American Association of University Women (AAUW), she would like the OWAA to host salary negotiation trainings this year, one in each county. She asked the Council to brainstorm organizations that might be interested in partnering with OWAA by cosponsoring the event. This would include providing a location for the salary negotiation seminar, possibly food and beverage, and advertising the event to their respective networks. Ideally, one training would happen in April/May, and the remaining trainings would occur in the fall.

The Council discussed hosting the trainings in the evening to increase turnout, and discussed potential locations, such as the Christina Cultural Arts Center, Del Tech, and the Sunrise Rotary Club. Ms. Ross Levin asked the Council to email her with ideas for host organizations.

Overview of Conference Call with Boston Team and Discussion of Key Takeaways for initial steps with data and company buy in.

Louise Cummings-Lewis detailed a conference call between the Boston Office of Women's Advancements staff and Melanie Ross Levin, which took place on February 2, 2018. The group discussed challenges they faced when launching, and recruiting private sector companies to participate in their programming. In addition, they used their company relationships to help with hosting events. A major challenge was ensuring that the companies' information, which was being shared voluntarily, was kept private and secure. They used a university to help with their data. They also discussed reaching out to Boston member businesses that also had locations in Delaware.

There was discussion around issues with the business data remaining private in Delaware, if a public organization was partnering with them. Clarification would be sought on public access to meetings with private businesses regarding their employment information.

ERA Letter Review

Linda Barnett talked about the Equal Rights Amendment (House Bill 299) and the Rally for the ERA. Ms. Barnett drafted a letter from the Workforce Council which stated their support of the bill, and she asked if anyone from the Council would be willing to testify in support of the legislation.

Carling Ryan stated that the Office of Women's Advancement & Advocacy will distribute the letters in person. Melanie Ross Levin would like group to let her know if anyone can reach out to the legislators and then they can send out letters. Ms. Ryan stated that she will develop a

chart with contact information for legislators and staff, as well as a template for an email to send to legislators thanking or asking them for their support. An email with this chart and instructions would be sent to Council members.

Discussion of Strategic Plan for the Council & Create committees for Research and Private Business Sector components.

Louise Cummings-Lewis talked about the Workforce Council Action Plan, which needed to be developed to ensure that the group was following the requirements set forth in HB 4.

The Workforce Council is required to conduct a study of gender-based inequities in workplaces in Delaware, starting with public employees and eventually expanding to the private sector, and identify root causes that result in gender based wage disparities. Additionally, the Council is tasked with identifying the obstacles that working women face that negatively impact women's advancement.

Like Boston, the Council would ask private sector businesses to partner with OWAA and pledge to eliminate gender based inequities. The Council may create and implement a memorandum of understanding between the Council and private employers requiring that private employers provide data and information annually to the Council to be kept confidentially. The Council discussed how the creation of subcommittees would help with research and gathering of information for both the public and private sector, and decided to prioritize public sector information first. Additionally, it was noted that other members of the public may be named to these Council subcommittees. Roxane Ferguson suggested working with Delaware Decision Makers to help engage the private sector.

The following Council members agreed to head up a strategic planning subcommittee to develop a plan for task implementation: Christopher Waters (Chair), Roxanne Ferguson (Co-Chair), Yvonne Gordon, Chrissi Rawak, Katey Evans and Christine Mason.

Louise Cummings-Lewis encouraged members to attend a town hall on March 17, 2018, with Representative Valerie Longhurst and Rehoboth City Commissioner Kathy McGuinness.

Adjourned 12:36pm

Next Meeting: May 14, 2018